



United States Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Washington, DC 20522

December 27, 2013

Dear American Host Family:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I welcome your decision to host an Au Pair exchange participant. The Au Pair program is one of many ways foreign nationals participate in people-to-people exchange programs in the United States. People-to-people exchanges are a valuable tool of foreign policy. The Au Pair program offers a unique opportunity for you to experience first-hand the richness and diversity of a culture different from your own, and for you to exemplify American culture for a foreign visitor. Through this program, you are among thousands of American families who serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States. Many families have found the Au Pair program to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

It is important that you understand the program before deciding if you and your family will benefit. Our Au Pair program is primarily an exchange opportunity with the goal of increasing mutual understanding between foreign nationals and Americans. The way you interact with your au pair will have a significant impact on the way he or she understands this country. It is important to remember that au pairs are not simply childcare providers; they are guests in this country and may need time to adjust, especially in the beginning. Your au pair will likely have much to learn about American customs and culture, and may begin an exchange in the U.S. with only basic English language skills. As such, the most successful hosts expend the time and energy necessary to help their au pair adjust to American life and to ensure their au pairs are happy, healthy, and engaging in cultural activities. Hosts should maintain a high level of communication, attention, and understanding throughout the program. I ask you to assess carefully the amount of time and attention you have available before committing.

Secondly, while you are hosting a young person who will help you care for your children, the ultimate responsibility for your children's well-being continues to rest with you. You must be prepared to work with your au pair to establish the best care for your children. Keeping a transparent schedule that you both agree to is important and will reduce misunderstandings.

Au pairs may not provide more than 10 hours of childcare per day, or exceed 45 hours per week. EduCare participants may work no more than 10 hours a day, or exceed 30 hours per week, and may not be placed in a home with pre-school children unless an alternative full-time care arrangement is in place. Au pairs may not perform general housekeeping chores unrelated to the care of your children. Au pairs are required to complete an educational component, thus flexibility in arranging work schedules may be needed so that au pairs may fully access this opportunity while in the U.S. All au pairs receive one and a half days off each week, a complete weekend off each month, and two weeks of paid vacation.

Information about the Au Pair program may be found on our website at [Au Pair | Programs | J-1 Visa](#). The regulations governing the program are found at [eCFR — Code of Federal Regulations](#) (22 CFR 62 - Exchange Visitor Program). These regulations address most frequently asked questions about the program and provide the rules under which the program operates. The Department is unable to mediate disputes involving au pairs, host families, and sponsoring organizations. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization if you have any concerns or if the au pair's personal health, safety, or well-being is threatened in any way. If the sponsoring organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should contact the Department directly at our email address (jvisas@state.gov).

The Au Pair program offers you, your children, and your au pair the opportunity to create a strong lifelong relationship. I hope this will be a positive and rewarding experience for all of you. The U.S. Department of State is deeply appreciative of your part in ensuring the program reaches its maximum potential as a quality educational and cultural exchange experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin J. Lerner", is centered below the word "Sincerely,".

Robin J. Lerner
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Private Sector Exchange